

5. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE WILD DOG IN THE
KANHA NATIONAL PARK

During my stay in the Kanha National Park, Mandla District, Madhya Pradesh, in connection with the study of wildlife from March, 1971 to March, 1972, some interesting unrecorded observations on the wild dog were made by me and are reproduced from my field diary.

On 11-vi-1971 at about 6.00 p.m. a wild dog was seen running towards a large tank called Srawantal. It was being followed by four jackals, three of which were at a distance of about 60-70 metres from the wild dog, while the fourth was close behind. The dog went straight to a fairly large herd of chital on the bank of the pond, and attacked a large (about 2-3 year old) stag. The dog caught hold of the chital's muzzle and during the struggle both moved into the water. The dog did not let lose its grip and the stag's muzzle was pushed under water. Within minutes, the chital died of suffocation. The dog dragged the dead chital towards the centre of the tank where it was left without any attempt to eat. The dog came out of water and trotted back in the same direction from which it had come. The observations were made from a watch tower and the dog did not detect the presence of the observer. It did not return to its kill till next morning when the chital was removed from the tank. The possible explanation for dragging the dead chital towards the centre of the water tank appears to be that it wanted to save the kill from the jackals.

On 21-vi-1971 at 6.20 p.m. an alarm call was given by a grazing herd of chital from the meadow close to the rest house. The cause of the call was a wild dog, and an yearling chital hind was soon caught and killed. As we moved towards the dead chital, the wild dog started running and we spotted another wild dog close by and both escaped into the forest. Another kill, a large chital stag, was spotted by us close to the one mentioned above. It appeared to have been made a day earlier, but had not been eaten.

Beside the above observations, I have observed a number of kills of chital and sambar made by wild dogs during my one year stay.

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